

# "CHIPS OF THE OLD BLOCK."



## STATISTICS OF THE BOOK PRODUCTION OF THE WORLD COLLATED AND ANALYZED.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.  
In view of the enormous output from the publishers' presses in these days of strenuous book production, it is somewhat staggering to attempt to realize just how many books have been printed since civilization reached the book period.

As to just how old is the art of writing, that is a difficult question, not yet solved with any accuracy by the scientists. There is the old motto so often used on the book covers, "Blessed be the man who invented books," and so on. But who is that man? If you mean the printed book, as we know it to-day, some idea might be formed. But there is the papyrus to consider, and you might go back to the times of yore, when the Commandments were inscribed on stone tablets.

Anyway, everybody is fairly well agreed that books are a good thing, even if some do bore one frightfully. Our sentiments hardly agree with those of that unrecking fellow who declared that though we can live without books, we cannot live without cooks. Of course, we could live without cooks; we could do our own cooking—read while waiting for the coffee to boil, or while the potatoes were such a blessed long time in reaching the soft and mealy state of edibility.

However, this is hardly what I started out to say—My intention was to remark that the editor of "The Publishers' Weekly," Mr. A. Grover, supplied an article to a recent issue of "The Independent," in which, in an essay of the title, he attempted to approximate "The Literary Production of the World."

"Current thought and estimate," he says, "on this subject are the vaguest. Every one knows that literary production of recent years has grown to proportions almost too vast to be computed; but very few people have an estimate within several thousands either way of the year's publications of any one country, not even of their own."

"World statistics of publishing that have been tried and not found wanting are not yet available. During the current year the official organ of the German book trade made an exhaustive study of the subject; and the official organ of the Berne Convention has for several years attempted a report of the world's literature, and the Publishers' Weekly, one of the book-trade journals of the United States, year by year gives statistics of American book production and a resume of the literary production of the world. But one and all acknowledge that in default of an international standard of uniform classification, in view of the unsettled questions as to the meaning of edition, new edition, and new issue, and in view of the large output of ephemeral publications of which some countries make record and others do not, it is not yet possible to compile wholly accurate statistics."

Nevertheless, despite that Mr. Grover admits the necessary inaccuracy of figures, he supplies tables, which may be taken as near an approximation as it is possible to attain to. Here is his table by countries, showing the yearly output as it has been compiled for the larger countries. Blanks are left where the information is untrustworthy:

Year	Books	Newspapers and Periodicals
Germany.....1902	26,508	1,000
Japan.....1899	21,228	1,000
Russia.....1895	17,892	1,000
France.....1902	15,139	1,000
Italy.....1900	9,572	1,000
United States.....1902	7,521	2,100
Great Britain.....1902	7,381	1,000
Austro-Hungary.....1899	5,000	1,000
Holland.....1901	2,837	1,000
Belgium.....1901	2,628	1,000
Rumania.....1901	1,739	1,000
Sweden.....1900	1,632	1,000
Switzerland.....1900	1,500	1,000
Denmark.....1900	1,240	1,000
Spain and Portugal.....1897	1,203	1,000
Turkey.....1900	910	1,000
Argentina Republic.....1898	718	1,000
Chile.....1901	510	1,000
Norway.....1901	418	1,000
Canada.....1901	255	1,000
China.....1901	160	1,000
Japan.....1901	148	1,000
African countries.....	1,000	1,000
Australia.....1902	1,000	1,000
Brazil.....1902	1,000	1,000
Bulgaria.....1901	1,000	1,000
China.....1901	1,000	1,000
Finland.....1901	1,000	1,000
Greece.....1901	1,000	1,000
India.....1901	1,000	1,000
Peru.....1901	1,000	1,000
Serbia.....1901	1,000	1,000
Siberia.....1901	1,000	1,000
Totals.....	121,376	54,794

Again quoting "The Publishers' Weekly," "Feynot and Olet have estimated the number of books to 1903. For the following years Olet adopts 200,000 as a yearly average. This seems rather high, and the figures of the table, which would make 150,000 per year a good average, seem more reliable. This would give the following schedule:

**Jett's** Book Store,  
806 Olive Street.